

The number of meth labs seized in Indiana has doubled every year since 1994.

# Stopping the spread of *Meth* in our community

Important information from Representative Trent Van Haften

## *What is meth?*

Methamphetamine, known as meth, is a dangerously addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. The drug, produced with common ingredients, has short-term effects including hallucinations, violent and aggressive behavior, and paranoia.

Meth has soared in popularity among criminals due to its addictive nature and easy production. Common items containing the chemicals needed to create the drug include lithium batteries, anhydrous ammonia, starter fluid and sudaphedrine, a substance used in cold medications.

Drug labs are simple to establish. Labs have been discovered in homes, hotel rooms, abandoned buildings and even in vehicles. Because the chemicals involved in meth production are highly flammable, there is great potential for fires, explosions and possible environmental contamination. This not only puts the criminals at risk, but also officers responding to the scene and residents in the area.

## *How can we fight it?*

In order to fight the spread of meth before it is produced, legislators passed a law in 2003 that makes possession of precursors (meth ingredients) with the intent of making meth a Class D felony. This law, HB 1082, also makes it illegal for an adult to take a child into any place being used to sell, produce or store illegal drugs. Additionally, HB 1082 requires a person convicted of meth offenses to pay for the cost of any environmental clean-up resulting from his or her crime.

During this year's legislative session we established a task force to conduct hearings across the state regarding Indiana's meth problem. The task force will study how the production of meth affects law enforcement, fire departments, schools, health services and social services in Indiana, and will create a strategic plan to address these issues.



# Representative Trent Van Haaften urges you to educate yourself about

# Meth

## Signs to watch for in your neighborhood

- ♦ An unusual, strong chemical odor, such as that of ammonia or paint solvents
- ♦ Homes with windows blackened-out
- ♦ Renters who pay landlords with cash
- ♦ Lots of traffic at a residence at odd hours
- ♦ Excessive trash with chemical odors
- ♦ Unusual or threatening posters

Although meth is more common in rural areas of the state, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern Indiana District reports that meth abuse is spreading into urban areas.

## The impact of meth on society

- Explosions and fires triggered by the illegal manufacture of meth in makeshift labs
- Environmental contamination
- Meth-related child neglect, child and spousal abuse, sexual abuse, homicide, and property crime, especially mail and check fraud
- Emergency room and other medical costs
- Spread of infectious disease, including HIV, AIDS and hepatitis
- Lost worker productivity
- Economic costs to governments, which must allocate additional resources for social services and law enforcement



*Reported by the Indiana Criminal  
Justice Institute*

Number of  
meth labs  
seized in our  
community  
in 2003:

Gibson County  
**21**

Posey County  
**99**

Vanderburgh  
County  
**99**



## Rep. Trent Van Haaften

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